

British reliance on local, native knowledge and experience (pp. 142ff.), which they openly acknowledged as superior in reliability to the “fixed data” they themselves produced. Hence, this British document aimed to homogenize and freeze in time a region that the Ottoman document presented as a fragmented space subject to different temporalities. The efficiency of Wick’s approach lies in his decision to juxtapose two different sources in two different chapters, rather than combine them in one chapter; however, the full potential of this methodology will need to be tested against more sources of the same kind.

A sophisticated and erudite book, *The Red Sea: In Search of Lost Space* belongs to a new generation of theoretically innovative texts which, while written by Ottomanists, invite all historians to “engage the practice of history writing through a sustained interrogation” (p. 7) of some of the basic concepts—here, the “sea”—which have guided our craft.<sup>1</sup> On occasion, the book’s theoretical density may give the impression that it has led to certain simplifications, such as the notion that still too many historians are driven by a positivistic “fetish of the defter” (p. 55). But this is a mere detail in a very important work which will easily appeal to scholars across humanities and the social sciences.

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**Alexander Anievas and Kerem Nişancıoğlu. *How the West Came to Rule: The Geopolitical Origins of Capitalism*. London: Pluto Press, 2015, xiii + 386 pages.**

Contemporary debates on the origins of capitalism are closely related to Karl Marx’s illustration of the different paths toward capitalism. One of these paths is the shift from the feudal exploitation of unfree labor to capitalist exploitation of free labor. Marx illustrated this shift through an analysis of the dispossession of the peasantry, the commodification of labor, and the spread of

1 As an example, Marc Aymes also engaged with the practice of history-writing through a very thorough discussion of the notion of the province in *A Provincial History of the Ottoman Empire: Cyprus and the Eastern Mediterranean in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 2013).

wage labor in England.<sup>1</sup> This is described as an essentially internal/national process without much international involvement. Another, and essentially global, path proceeded through Western colonialism and the formation of the world market.<sup>2</sup> “Political Marxism”—as represented by Robert Brenner, Ellen Meiksins Wood, and others—focuses on the first path and proposes that capitalism developed first in English agriculture before subsequently expanding elsewhere. The “world systems analysis”—as represented by Giovanni Arrighi, Immanuel Wallerstein, and others—focuses on the second path and suggests that the Western-dominated formation of the world market was the key factor behind the emergence of capitalism. Finally, the postcolonial theory—as represented by Dipesh Chakrabarty, Partha Chatterjee, and others—criticizes the primacy given to Western agency in both accounts and adds complexity to the history of capitalism by shedding light on non-Western trajectories.

Alexander Anievas and Kerem Nişancıoğlu’s *How the West Came to Rule: The Geopolitical Origins of Capitalism* is an ambitious book that critically engages with these literatures and aims to provide a stronger account of the origins of capitalism. Chapter 1 provides a balance sheet of the strengths and weaknesses of these literatures. According to Anievas and Nişancıoğlu, by solely focusing on the transformation of the relations of production in the English countryside, Political Marxism fails to take into account the significant impact of urban, geopolitical, and international factors. They stress how the armament and shipping industries witnessed a significant concentration of capital and employed a large amount of wage labor from the sixteenth century on (p. 29). Without the transfer of enormous material resources from the colonies to England and of the surplus English population to the colonies, capitalism “would have been choked off by the limits of English agrarian capitalism” (p. 152). Political Marxism’s internalist perspective also overlooks “technological, cultural, institutional and social-relational discoveries and developments originating outside Europe that were appropriated by Europe in the course of its capitalist development” (p. 25).

The authors acknowledge the merits of world systems scholarship in overcoming these limitations by shifting the unit of analysis to the world economy and taking colonialism into account when explaining the origins of capitalism. However, by underemphasizing the notion of the modes of production and overemphasizing commerce and core-periphery relationships,

1 Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume 1*, tr. B. Fowkes (New York: Vintage, 1977), 895.

2 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Trucker (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1978), 474.

world systems scholarship often misses out on the historical specificity of capitalism. Some of its more extreme versions even stretch the history of the world system back several millennia (p. 20). And finally, since it takes the existence of capitalism for granted and only adds complexity to its later history by studying non-European experiences, the postcolonial literature has been unable to achieve its goal of “provincializing Europe” (pp. 7, 14, 40).

In Chapter 2 and the rest of the book, the authors explain how Leon Trotsky’s theory of “uneven and combined development” helps to avoid these problems to provide a truly global explanation of the origins of capitalism. Trotsky starts by recognizing the “multiplicity of societies varying in size, culture, political organization, material and non-material productivity” as the “most general law” of history (p. 45). Uneven development—i.e., differential tempos and forms of social change—operates both within and between societies. Intersocietal relations have provided some backward economies with a “privilege of backwardness,” the opportunity to “skip over intermediate steps” and catch up with the advanced economies. The United States, for example, skipped over the feudal and protoindustrial stages that England and France went through and eventually surpassed them. Following a period of technology imports, Tsarist Russia’s industrial sector reached a degree of capital concentration and scale of production higher than its Western counterparts in the early twentieth century (pp. 45–46).<sup>3</sup> Knowledge and technology transfers often take a reverse direction. Advanced formations also learn from less developed ones, as observed in European colonialists’ combination of advanced production techniques with slavery, a form of labor organization borrowed from West Africa (pp. 158–162). These combinations often create diversity rather than similarity. For instance, the combination of Western industrial achievements with slightly transformed feudal social relations made Russia a peculiar formation (pp. 45–47). Likewise, despite being established by European capital, American plantations were significantly different from European farms (pp. 158–159). Overall, the upshot of Trotsky’s theory is that various forms of intersocietal relations play a constitutive role in the making, unmaking, and unevenness of economic, social, and political structures, a factor that became increasingly pronounced under capitalism.

Chapter 3 examines how the “Pax Mongolica” (1210–1350) helped Europe benefit from the privilege of its backwardness. The Mongol unification of the Eurasian landmass put Europe and China in direct contact, which helped Europe transfer advanced science and technology from Asian societies. Hence, Europe “did not need to start from scratch, but could instead acquire and

3 Also see Leon Trotsky, *History of the Russian Revolution*, tr. Max Eastman (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2008), 4–8.

refine the most advanced technological and organizational forms” (p. 67). By protecting trade routes and offering privileges to Italian city-states such as Genoa and Venice, the Mongols helped to lower transaction costs, which in turn assisted urban economic development in Europe. By contrast, the continuous preoccupation with the nomadic threat during and after the Pax Mongolica prevented China from reaching the Americas, a factor that eventually transformed global power relations. It was also Eurasian connectivity that made the rapid spread of the Black Death to Europe possible. The resulting demographic transformation initiated a chain of events—rent reductions, wage increases, agricultural mechanization, and peasant differentiation—that marked the shift from feudalism to capitalism.

Chapter 4 starts with a critique of the neglect of the Ottoman Empire’s role in studies on the origins of capitalism. According to Anievas and Nişancıoğlu, “even Ottomanists working within the anti-Eurocentric research programme have tended to stand outside of debates concerning the origins of capitalism” (p. 93). They argue that European-Ottoman relations over the long sixteenth century (1450–1650) facilitated the transmission of organizational and technological knowledge from the Ottomans to Europe, as exemplified by the imitation of certain Eastern products and the adaptation of the *simsar* (broker) monopoly association and *mudaraba* (commenda) advance system, which assisted the emergence of “company capitalism.” While Ottoman-French cooperation assisted protoindustrialization in Marseilles, the Ottoman-Italian competition in silk markets led to the creation of the hydraulic mill in Bologna, which eventually provided the foundation of Lombe’s Mill in Derby in the early eighteenth century, “arguably the world’s first fully mechanized factory” (p. 109). More importantly, the Ottoman military challenge to the Habsburgs, Genoese, Venetians, Spanish, and Portuguese relieved geopolitical pressure across northwestern Europe. This helped the homogenization of the English ruling classes, thereby enabling them to dispossess the peasantry and organize capitalist agriculture. Ottoman agricultural exports to northwestern Europe freed farmland from extensive production, increased land prices, and in this way facilitated land transfers from small to large producers. Finally, by forcing the Genoese out of the Mediterranean, the Ottomans triggered the process of the colonization of the Americas, without which capitalism would not have been able to rise (pp. 115–119). Chapter 6 recalls how the Habsburg fiscal decline owing to its protracted struggle against the Ottoman-French alliance provided the immediate context for the Dutch revolt against the Habsburgs in 1566, the first bourgeois revolution in history (p. 187). In short, primitive accumulation and the formation of capitalist states in Western Europe should be contextualized by taking Ottoman agency into account.

Chapters 5, 7, and 8 demonstrate the centrality of colonial transfers in the development of European capitalism. Through an analysis of the *encomienda* system (of the sixteenth century) and the plantation system (of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries), the authors also illustrate the constitutive role of the struggles between the colonizers and the colonized in the emergence of capitalist production relations in the Americas. Similarly, they demonstrate how the manipulation of the advance system by producers and intermediaries forced the Dutch East India Company to directly control production and distribution processes in South Asia in the seventeenth century (pp. 241–242). This analysis of the transformation of merchant into industrial capital, which was considered by Marx a possible pathway to capitalism, provides an antidote to Political Marxism's false assumption of a contradiction between production and circulation and to some world systems scholars' neglect of productive transformations (pp. 171–172).

One of the key contributions of Anievas and Nişancıoğlu's book is how it traces the origins of capitalist production in mutually transforming intersocietal relations. Throughout the book, the authors stress their goal of retaining the historical specificity of capitalism by keeping track of the transformations of relations of production (pp. 14–16, 20–22, 172, 218). Through their investigations of the *encomienda* and plantation systems in the Americas and the spread of factory production by Dutch capital in South Asia, they achieve this goal to a considerable extent. By showing how colonial capital was forced to adopt different strategies to organize production due primarily to the problems they encountered at the point of production, these cases clearly and directly illustrate the relationship between contradictory intersocietal relations and the transformations of the sphere of production outside Europe along (increasingly) capitalist lines. Here, intersocietal relations are actually class relations between colonial capital and native capital and labor. Moreover, the authors are right to support the (already well-established) argument that European capitalism could not have risen as it did without colonial extraction. However, the book's chapters on the Mongol and Ottoman empires tell a quite different story: they show how geopolitical relations and knowledge transfers impacted the capitalist transformation of production relations within European states. Here, intersocietal relations are interstate relations that took place far from the point of production and therefore only indirectly shaped the emergence of capitalist production. Hence, although these two chapters are interesting and informative, they do not achieve a similar degree of success in examining the constitutive role played by intersocietal relations in the emergence of capitalist production. The authors and others working within a similar framework will hopefully fill this gap in the future by focusing more on how colonial and semi-colonial contradictions led (or failed to lead) to direct capitalist control over

production, which may further strengthen the theory. Overall, this book makes a lasting contribution to theories of the origins of capitalism.

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**Devin Naar.** *Jewish Salonica: Between the Ottoman Empire and Modern Greece.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016, xii + 366 pages.

Devin Naar's book on the changing structure of Salonica's Jewish community offers an insightful analysis of how the Sephardic Jewish community became embedded in the political frameworks of Ottomanism and Hellenism from the late Ottoman period to the Nazi occupation of the city between 1941 and 1944. The book, consisting of five interrelated chapters, highlights how different actors of the Jewish community developed strategies to negotiate their political positions in the city's changing political landscape. In the first chapter, Naar focuses on the impact of the institutionalization of the late Ottoman *millet* system (a self-governing organization based on religious affiliation) on the Salonican Jewish community. The chapter suggests that this institutionalization played a pivotal role in the formation of local Jewish identity during the transition from empire to nation-state. The second chapter deals primarily with the competing discourses and political agendas regarding the nature and status of the Salonican chief rabbinate from the late Ottoman period through World War II. The author argues that, although the chief rabbis continued to exert religious power over the Jews of Salonica, different groups in the city disagreed over their political status. The workings of communal schools constitute the focus of the third chapter, which emphasizes the changing role of language and curricula in the identity formation of Salonican Jews. The fourth chapter explores how changing political and cultural dynamics in the city during the transition from the Ottoman Empire to modern Greece affected the Jewish community's interest in their own history. Naar claims that, during the interwar years, different political groups began to pay special attention to writing the history of Salonican Jews in order to strengthen their position in the city. The fifth chapter, which is largely descriptive, examines the ways through which the Jewish community sought to protect Salonica's Jewish cemetery—one of the largest in Europe—from the late Ottoman era to World War II. This final chapter demonstrates that, although the Jewish burial ground